THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

February/March 2013 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

A Sin to Shop at Walmart?

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

On June 29, 2012, Walmart suspended its business with C.J.'s Seafood in Breaux Bridge, Louisana, under pressure from the National Guestworker Alliance, which exposed the supplier as "one of the worst workplaces we have encountered anywhere." Immigrant workers at C.J.'s were forced to work as much as 24 hours consecutively and 80 a week. Refusals led to beatings and threats of harm to their families in Mexico.

On November 24, 2012, 112 workers were killed in a fire at the Tareen Fashions factory in Bangladesh. The extremely low-wage workers were employed in a locked building with no working fire exstinguishers. (One could not help but associate this catastrophe with New York City's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911, which caused the deaths of 146 garment workers.) When it was revealed that Tareen made garments for Walmart and Sears, both companies denied knowing that it was their supplier. Walmart later pledged to exert more pressure on Asian governments to improve conditions for garment workers.

On the day before the fatal fire, thousands of Walmart's American workers struck for better wages and working conditions. Although high profile, the strikers respresented only a tiny fraction of Walmart's 1.4 million US employees, many of whom told reporters that they feared company reprisals for striking. When my housemate, Dave Maciewski, offered a leaflet to a Walmart worker in Millbury, Massachusetts, her manager warned, in flagrant violation of labor laws, "If you take that, you'll be fired."

Walmart might argue that its stingy approach to labor at home and abroad is an essential part of how the retailer provides low prices to consumers. It's an argument that is contradicted by Walmart's bottom line. For the fiscal year ending January 31, 2011, Walmart reported a net income of $15.4 billion on $422 billion of revenue with a 24.7 percent gross profit margin.

Illustration of the 1911 fire in New York City

While most of the nation was suffering from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, Walmart was reaping record profits. The company modifies its miserly ways only when it is exposed by activists like the National Guestworker Alliance. If Walmart could get away with it, I have no doubt that the corporation would use slave labor.

In a way, it's quite easy to demonize companies like Walmart. The capitalist system rewards Walmart for squeezing workers as hard as it can. Corporate greed and insensitivity are things we can all despise. What is harder is the self-criticism which comes from realizing our complicity in Walmart's abuse. As consumers, we naturally want to pay as little as possible for what we buy. Walmart offers prices

(Continued on Page 2)

Gun Facts

Editor's Note: In light of the horrific mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, we provide these details on US gun use. Everything is quoted from the sources cited. We hope this information will help dispel myths about guns and move us closer to a gun-free society.

Based on production data from firearm manufacturers,there are roughly 300 million firearms owned by civilians in the United States as of 2010. Of these, about 100 million are handguns (National Rifle Association, 1/20/10. http://www.nraila.org/Issues/FactSheets/Read.aspx?ID=83).

• When Adam Lanza entered Sandy Hook Elementary School on Friday, December 14, inexplicably bent on ending as many lives as possible, he was carrying a Bushmaster AR-15 assault rifle and several high capacity magazines.... Only days earlier, it was the weapon of choice for a shooting at an Oregon mall that killed two people. Five months earlier, it was used by James Holmes in an attack that wounded 58 people and killed 12 in an Aurora, Colorado movie theater. And several years before that, a man and his teenage accomplice used a Bushmaster AR-15 to terrorize the Washington, DC area with a series of random shootings. Although it is not clear where the Bushmaster AR-15 used by Lanza was purchased... it's on sale at about 1,700 Walmart stores nationwide ("Walmart: America's No. 1 Gun Source" by George Zornick, *The Nation*, January 7/14, 2013).

• Higher household gun ownership correlates with higher rates of homicides, suicides, and unintentional shootings (Harvard School of Public Health, 2009, http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/research/

(Continued on Page 4)

Vol. 29, No. 4 THE Feb./March2013

CATHOLIC RADICAL

Published by:
The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community
52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610 Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089
Email:theresecw2@gmail.com

Founded in 1933, The Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Walmart

(Continued from Page 1)

which put mom and pop stores out of business. When we shop at Walmart, we fatten the corporate honchos and depress wages for all workers, even those beyond Walmart. We also support the shifting of the burden of economic justice away from businesses to government. Wartmart's employees are paid so little that they received nearly $3 billion last year in food stamps and Medicaid. Ironically, taxpayers are effectively subsidizing Walmart for its failure to pay its workforce a living wage with healthcare.

So, is it a sin to shop at Walmart? Although it sounds like a slam dunk YES, the question is more complex. Sin is a deliberate act. Ignorance, while not an objective excuse, is a subjective one. When most of us go into a well-lit, clean, big-box store, the last thing we think of is workers in a sweatshop. The sordid reality is not in our faces. The employees don't whisper to us, "Please save us, we're being exploited!" We may even believe that it's the government's job, not the consumer's, to ensure fair working conditions. Unfortunately, politicians are increasingly the recipients of fat campaign donations from giants like Walmart, even more so since the US Supreme Court ruled that corporations could make unlimited political donations. Don't expect politicians, Democrat or Republican, to press Walmart very hard on its labor practices. Quite the opposite, politicians are likely to offer Walmart huge tax breaks to locate in their districts.

But knowledge is power. Three years ago, our friend David Maher gave a presentation at our house about a trip he made to Central America. He provided a shocking report of labor conditions on banana plantations. We learned that workers were not paid living wages and that they were exposed to deadly pesticides which also contaminate the fruit we consume. Since

David's talk, we have bought only organic and, whenever possible, fair-trade bananas. David gave us power and responsibility. We experienced a similar epiphany when Hollis Dunlop, a Providence College student, educated us about the environmental harm and economic exploitation of the bottled water industry. I haven't bought a plastic water bottle since.

Of course, being a just consumer isn't always easy. I contributed quite a bit to global warming when I drove to seven different shoe stores trying to find footwear not made in China. And what can we do when the only store selling what we need is a big-box outlet like Walmart? Hard economic times can put fair-trade and organic products beyond our means.

One example of the complexity of economic justice is a little-noticed feature of the Israel/Palestine conflict. A great deal of attention is focused on the illegality of Israeli construction of Jewish settlements on occupied Palestinian land, but virtually no attention is given to the fact that all of those settlements are constructed by employment-hungry Palestinians. The same is true for the Israeli separation barrier. The World Court declared it illegal and ordered the wall dismantled, but no one commented on the immorality of Palestinians constructing it.

Peter Maurin, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker, had a helpful insight: "People say: 'They don't do this, they don't do that, they ought to do this, they ought to do that.' Always 'They' and never 'I.'" It's far easier to decry the moguls of Walmart than to question our own economic choices, but change does begin with ourselves. When Jesus told His apostles, "**It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God**," they asked Him, "**Then who can be saved?**" Christ gave a comforting answer, "**All things are possible with God**."

We cannot practice perfect economic justice. We have limitations of knowledge, time, and resources. We cannot do everything, but we *can* do something. Although I have never shopped at Walmart, I have bought products at not-much-better stores, like Target. We need to do our best and to raise our voices for more just options. We have more power than we realize. Companies will treat workers better if we make it clear that our dollars will only go to those which do just that. Maybe we can't afford or find exclusively fair-trade products, but we can do what we can, when we can. We can stretch ourselves and make the kind of sacrifices that give an example of other-centeredness, the root of economic justice. When we stop thinking only of ourselves, the world becomes a gentler place for everyone, especially those in near and far-away sweat shops. Ω

Westborough Eight

by Patrick Duffy

Editor's Note: The author is a junior at Harvard College where he is pursuing a degree in Social Studies. He took the photo at the right. The defendants' next court appearance is at the Westborough District Court on March 4. For more information, go to: http://january7th.wordpress.com/who-we-are/

The Westboro Eight: (left to right) Ben Trolio, Ali Welton, Dorian Williams, Devyn Powell, Ben Thompson, Emily Edgerly, Shea Riester, Lisa Purdy, and supporters Michael True and David Williams outside the Westborough District Courthouse.

On January 7, 2013, eight young activists chained themselves together at the entrance of TransCanada's Corporate Office in Westborough, Massachusetts. All eight have local connections, the majority coming from area colleges and universities. But this group is extremely diverse in their interests and backgrounds, sharing only a desire to stop TransCanada and the United States government from completing the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The Keystone XL Pipeline is really an extension of the existing Keystone Pipeline. If completed, the project will connect Alberta, Canada and Texas, allowing the flow of oil in one continuous pipeline across the entire United States. TransCanada and its supporters continue to push for the Pipeline's extension touting its economic benefits, both locally and nationally. Their primary claims focus on job creation, greater local tax revenue, and greater energy independence for the United States with plentiful oil flowing from Canada. But whenever there is revenue there is also cost. Even my conservative economics professor knows this, constantly reminding me, "There is no such thing as a free lunch." The same is true with the Keystone XL Pipeline, this is not free energy independence when examined with true cost benefit analysis.

These eight students performing civil disobedience at TransCanada's office understand these costs and were quick to explain them to me when I went to their court arraignment on January 9th. Ben Thompson, a Ph.D. candidate in Math at Boston University, is one of the eight activists. Ben explained to me that he and the other seven are all affiliated with *350.org*, an organization dedicated to protecting the environment, particularly focused on the climate and carbon emissions. The organization's name comes from the amount of carbon dioxide —350 parts per million— that should exist in the atmosphere. Ben reminds me that we are now at 392 parts per million, and upon the completion of this pipeline that number will only get larger.

TransCanada wants to build the KeyStone XL Pipeline to transport oil extracted from tar sands in the boreal forest of Canada. This is an environmental disaster in so many ways. To extract oil from tar sands requires high levels of heat which can only be reached through the burning of other fossil fuels. As a result, tar sands oil extraction causes three times the carbon emissions of traditional oil extraction. The boreal forest, where the tar sands oil would be extracted, is home to 11% of the world's carbon, making it one of the world's largest carbon reservoirs. The Sierra Club estimates that if tar sands oil extraction continues to go unregulated in the boreal forest, an area roughly the size of England will be destroyed. The Keystone XL project alone would contribute to the destruction of roughly 740,000 acres of the forest.

The list of environmental problems goes on and on. The Keystone Pipeline had 12 reported spills in its first year. Now, the Keystone XL Pipeline is threatening the drinking water of people across the country, particularly those in Texas and Nebraska. Under the current proposal, the Pipeline will run dangerously close to both the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer in Texas and the Ogallala Aquifer in Nebraska. In addition to all these concerns, the environmental impact report put together by the United States government was done by the State Department and not the Environmental Protection Agency. This point has come under intense scrutiny because Paul Elliott, a senior lobbyist for TransCanada now, was also a senior member of the Clinton presidential campaign in 2008.

Beyond all of these environmental concerns, the economic benefits of the project have been widely overstated by both TransCanada and the State Department. The Cornell Global Labor Institute (CGLI) published a 40 page report that strongly refutes all of the economic arguments made for the Keystone XL Pipeline. One of the most common claims is that the project is going to create 200,000 construction and manufacturing jobs. The report finds this statement to be completely lacking in any proof. Rather, CGLI's report estimated

(Continued on Page 6)

Gun Facts

(Continued from Page 1)

hicrc/firearms-research/guns-and-death/index.html).

• A gun in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in a completed or attempted suicide, criminal assault or homicide, or unintentional shooting death or injury than to be used in a self-defense shooting. (Kellermann, Arthur L. et al., "Injuries and Deaths Due to Firearms in the Home," Journal of Trauma, Injury, Infection, and Critical Care, 45(2) (1998): p. 263).

• Guns are used to intimidate and threaten 4 to 6 times more often than they are used to thwart crime (Hemenway, David and Deborah Azrael, "The Relative Frequency of Offensive and Defensive Gun Uses: Results From a National Survey," Violence and Victims, 15(3) (2000): p. 269).

• Every year there are only about 200 legally justified self-defense homicides by private citizens (FBI, Expanded Homicide Data, Table 15) compared with over 30,000 gun deaths (CDC National Center for Injury Prevention Control).

• A 2012 study found that Americans have a far lower life expectancy than citizens of any other wealthy nation, in part because of the widespread possession of firearms and the practice of storing them at home in a place that is often unlocked (Associated Press, January 10, 2013).

• A 2009 study found that people in possession of a gun are 4.5 times more likely to be shot in an assault (Branas et al, "Investigating the Link Between Gun Possession and Gun Assault," *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(11)(2009)).

• Sales of AR-15 semiautomatic rifles around the country are skyrocketing after the shootings in Newtown, Conn. (Dane Huffman, NBC17, 12/19/12).

• Roughly 2,000-5,200 gun shows take place in the United States each year ("The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Investigative Operations at Gun Shows," US Department of Justice, June 2007).

• It is estimated that over forty percent of gun acquisitions occur in the secondary market. That means that they happen without a Brady background check at a federally licensed dealer (Cook, Philip J, and Jens Ludwig, *Gun Violence: The Real Costs,* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 26).

THE U.S. HAS 5% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION
BUT ACCOUNTS FOR HALF OF ALL FIREARMS WORLDWIDE AND 80% OF GUN DEATHS IN THE 23 RICHEST COUNTRIES.
WWW.THEVINTAGEAVIATOR.COM
CONSTRUCTORS OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT

• The annual homicide rate per 100,000 people in the US is 2.97, while the rate is 0.07 in England and Wales. The US has an average of 88.8 firearms per 100 people. England and Wales have 6.2 firearms per 100 people (See: http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2012/jul/22/gun-homicides-ownership-world-list).

• In 2005, Florida became the first of nearly two-dozen states to pass a "stand your ground" law that removed the requirement to retreat. If you felt at risk of harm in a park or on the street, you could use lethal force to defend yourself.... Now, researchers have found that states with a stand your ground law have more homicides than states without such laws....

"These laws lower the cost of using lethal force," says Mark Hoekstra, an economist with Texas A&M University who examined stand your ground laws.... "Our study finds that homicides go up by 7 to 9 percent in states that pass the laws, relative to states that didn't pass the laws over the same time period....We find that there are 500 to 700 more homicides per year across the 23 states as a result of the laws," he said (http://www.npr.org/2013/01/02/167984117/-stand-your-ground-linked-to-increase-in-homicide).

• As of 2010, federal law does not prohibit members of terrorist organizations from purchasing or possessing firearms or explosives ("Terrorist Watchlist Screening," Government Accountability Office, May 5, 2010. http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-703T 82).

• America exported $336.5 million worth of firearms in 2011, according to customs data compiled by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers. That's $200 million more than Italy, the next leading exporter (http://www.cnbc.com/id/100273476/In_America_Guns_Are_a_Boom_Regulation_a_Bust).

• One week after the Aurora, Colorado massacre, ...an arms control treaty to regulate the $60 billion global business of illicit small arms trading was defeated at the United Nations when the US joined Russia in objecting to a final version.... Suzanne Nossel, executive director of Amnesty International, said the treaty would have created "a global background check to prevent countries and arms exporters from selling guns and military hardware to human rights abusers" (www.huffingtonpost.com/.../un-arms-trade-treaty-nra_n_1711578.html). Ω

Economic Peace & Justice

by Pope Benedict XVI

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from the Pope's World Peace Day Message delivered on January 1, 2013, in Rome.

It is alarming to see hotbeds of tension and conflict caused by growing instances of inequality between rich and poor, by the prevalence of a selfish and individualistic mindset which also finds expression in an unregulated financial capitalism....

One of the social rights and duties most under threat today is the right to work. The reason for this is that labour and the rightful recognition of workers' juridical status are increasingly undervalued, since economic development is thought to depend principally on completely free markets. Labour is thus regarded as a variable dependent on economic and financial mechanisms. In this regard, I would reaffirm that human dignity and economic, social and political factors demand that we continue "to prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone." If this ambitious goal is to be realized, one prior condition is a fresh outlook on work, based on ethical principles and spiritual values that reinforce the notion of work as a fundamental good for the individual, for the family and for society. Corresponding to this good are a duty and a right that demand courageous new policies of universal employment.

Ade Bethune

In many quarters it is now recognized that a new model of development is needed, as well as a new approach to the economy. Both integral, sustainable development in solidarity and the common good require a correct scale of goods and values which can be structured with God as the ultimate point of reference. It is not enough to have many different means and choices at one's disposal, however good these may be. Both the wide variety of goods fostering development and the presence of a wide range of choices must be employed against the horizon of a good life, an upright conduct that acknowledges the primacy of the spiritual and the call to work for the common good. Otherwise they lose their real value, and end up becoming new idols.

In order to emerge from the present financial and economic crisis – which has engendered ever greater inequalities – we need people, groups and institutions which will promote life by fostering human creativity, in order to draw from the crisis itself an opportunity for discernment and for a new economic model. The predominant model of recent decades called for seeking maximum profit and consumption, on the basis of an individualistic and selfish mindset, aimed at considering individuals solely in terms of their ability to meet the demands of competitiveness. Yet, from another standpoint, true and lasting success is attained through the gift of ourselves, our intellectual abilities and our entrepreneurial skills, since a "liveable" or truly human economic development requires the principle of gratuitousness as an expression of fraternity and the logic of gift.

Concretely, in economic activity, peacemakers are those who establish bonds of fairness and reciprocity with their colleagues, workers, clients and, consumers. They engage in economic activity for the sake of the common good and they experience this commitment as something transcending their self-interest, for the benefit of present and future generations. Thus they work not only for themselves, but also to ensure for others a future and a dignified employment. Ω

Swift Change

by Travis Andersen

Editor's Note: The following article was excerpted from The Boston Globe*, 1/11/13.*

Something didn't feel right to Andrew and Tracey Hyams when they entered the rest stop in Charlton on the Massachusetts Turnpike on Christmas Eve with their 12-year-old son and saw another boy absorbed in an arcade game.

The youth was firing a machine gun replica at the screen, licking off simulated rounds with a rapid-fire rat-tat-tat that reverberated off the walls. "You could even hear it in the bathroom," Andrew Hyams, 58, of Newton, said.

Because the plaza is close to Newtown, Conn., Hyams said, a relative of one of the school shooting victims could have walked in and seen a player firing away, 10 days after the massacre that took the lives of 20 first-graders and six adults.

"People have the freedom to have whatever video games in their own homes that they want," Hyams said. "We were struck by walking into a [state-owned] rest stop within an hour's drive of Newtown and seeing and hearing a life-sized, mounted machine gun on a video game.

The couple felt that such games had no place in public rest stops, and the state Department of Transportation agreed. After receiving an e-mail from the Hyams, the Massachusetts agency removed nine violent games from service plazas in Charlton, Ludlow, Lee, and Beverly....

Transportation Secretary Richard Davey said removing the games made sense in light of the Newtown tragedy.... Ω

Westborough Eight

(Continued from Page 3)

that the project will create no more than 5,000 temporary jobs in construction.

The next claim made by the company is that it will increase American energy independence by providing cheap oil in the market. CGLI's report along with Oil Change International demonstrate this claim to also be absolute nonsense. The American market is already flooded with oil, and it is clear from the project's design that the oil coming through the Keystone XL Pipeline to Port Arthur, Texas will be sold in Europe and Latin America. Valero is the largest customer for the tar sands oil and it has already detailed an export plan for the oil out of Port Arthur. The pipeline is not even completed and already these companies are planning how to send this oil elsewhere. The Keystone XL Pipeline will also be moving tar sands oil that was being used to power MidWest refineries to the Gulf Coast, a market with much higher demand and higher price. CGLI predicts that this could cause rising oil prices in the MidWest from anywhere between ten and twenty centsper gallon.

The Westborough Eight understand that there are economic gains to be made here, but these profits will be reserved for the rich, while the poor will continue to pay the price. Ben Thompson told me why he got involved with this demonstration and his reason took me aback. He did not cite the destruction of forests or the death of wildlife but instead was concerned for the fate of other human beings. Ben answered, "Last summer I saw images of the droughts happening across the world. We had the hottest summer in American history and corn production was extremely poor. It effects us in small ways, a pinch in our pockets, but for the poor this pinch becomes a stab."

We cannot continue to operate on such false cost benefit analysis, where all we think about is personal profit. We must expand our vision and recognize the realities of a globalized world. Too long has blind greed driven our country's every move. It is time for each one of us, like the Westborough Eight, to take action and help prevent a very real evil.

The Keystone XL Pipeline and America's addiction to oil are collective action problems. Both are generally agreed upon as harmful, but few feel compelled to take action. It is so much easier to remain complacent, but time is starting to run out. We can no longer sit back. Instead take heed of the message these young people so powerfully conveyed in their action. Environmental activists fear that President Obama is going to put the Keystone XL Pipeline on a fast track to approval. If he does, Senator John Kerry, the projected new Secretary of State will oversee it. Now is the time to speak to Senator Kerry. Tell him this project, this boondoggle, should not be completed. Tell him, "Not in my name!" Ω

Change?

On January 3, the Huffington Post reported: "President Barack Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013 yesterday, despite his own threat to veto it over prohibitions on closing the Guantánamo Bay prison camp.

"Civil liberties advocates had roundly criticized the bill over Guantánamo and a separate section that could allow the military to indefinitely detain American citizens on suspicions of supporting terrorism. Just as he did with last year's version of the bill, however, Obama decided that the need to pass the NDAA, which also sets the armed forces' $633 billion budget for the 2013 fiscal year, was simply 'too great to ignore.'

"Members of the human rights coalition that had urged Obama to follow through on his veto threat blasted his decision as a cave to congressional Republicans.

"'President Obama has utterly failed the first test of his second term, even before inauguration day,' American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Anthony Romero said in a statement. 'His signature means indefinite detention without charge or trial, as well as the illegal military commissions, will be extended.'"

On January 4, the Associated Press reported that a US drone missile strike in Pakistan killed Maulvi Nazir Wazir, a Taliban commander, and five others. These assassinations came three days after the Pakistani government released eight senior Taliban leaders in hope to jumpstart the Afghan peace process, prior to the NATO withdrawal.

In November, President Obama justified heavy Israeli air strikes on Gaza because "No country on Earth would tolerate missiles raining down on its citizens from outside its borders." US Representative Ron Paul responded, "Considering that this president rains down missiles on Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and numerous other countries on a daily basis, the statement was so hypocritical that it didn't pass the laugh test."

Pete Townsend, leader of the rock group The Who, said it best:

The change, it had to come
We knew it all along...
But history ain't changed
Cause the banners, they are flown in the next war.
I'll tip my hat to the new constitution
Take a bow for the new revolution
Smile and grin at the change all around
Pick up my guitar and play
Just like yesterday
Then I'll get on my knees and pray
We don't get fooled again!
No No!
Meet the new boss,
same as the old boss. Ω

Letters

Dear Scott & Claire:
...We look forward to your reaction to the defrocking of Father Roy Bourgeois [a Maryknoll priest expelled for his support of the ordination of women to the Catholic priesthood]. It was a sad day for him and for the Maryknoll community and another tragic day for the Roman Catholic Church. It's our prayer that one day soon God will open the eyes, hearts, and minds in the Vatican.

Of course, to those of us who believe ordination comes from God, Father Roy remains every bit as much of a priest today — perhaps even more of one — than before the Vatican's mistaken action.

Pace e Bene,

Paul and Katja Rhem
Greenville, New York

Editor's Note: In our opinion, the dismissal of Father Roy Bourgeois from the Maryknoll order and the Catholic priesthood was a great injustice against him personally and against women called by God to the priesthood. Although Pope Benedict has called the matter of women's ordination closed, we take heart from those like Father Roy who refuse to accept sexism as the norm.

For example, on November 28, 2012, the Institute Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas announced it was, "saddened and disturbed by the recent action of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to dismiss Father Roy Bourgeois from the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers.

"We have known and worked with Father Roy as an advocate for justice in both church and society, nationally and globally. Father Roy's commitment regarding the role of women in the church reflects our own as Sisters of Mercy since our Institute founding in 1991 when we stated in our Direction Statement that we will commit our lives and resources to act in solidarity with women seeking fullness of life and equality in church and society. We have heard Father Roy speak with respect and love for his church and find this an extraordinary moment of deep loss for religious life which he loves and to which he has given faithful service.

"Father Roy remains our brother and we thank him for his integrity and lifelong fidelity to the gospel of love, justice and peace."

And then The National Catholic Reporter editorial staff wrote on December 3, 2012, "The call to the priesthood is a gift from God. It is rooted in baptism and is called forth and affirmed by the community because it is authentic and evident in the person as a charism. Catholic women who have discerned a call to the priesthood and have had that call affirmed by the community should be ordained in the Roman Catholic church. Barring women from ordination to the priesthood is an injustice that cannot be allowed to stand."

The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker community will continue to pray for the ordination of women. For our readers who believe that the Church cannot ordain women because Jesus chose only male apostles, we encourage them to urge the Church to, at the very least, ordain women as deacons, a practice defined by Saint Paul in his first letter to Timothy and in Romans 16 where he calls Phoebe a deacon of the Church. Refusal to make this step widens the gap between modern Church rules and the practice of the earliest followers of Christ. It also fails to address the pastoral needs of Catholics today in many nations where there is an extreme shortage of ordained clergy. Ω

Shoe Shine

by Paul McNeil

In the executive office suite
of a commercial real estate firm
where the walls
are immaculate white
and the glass partitions
afford a panoramic view
of the whole world,
a shoe shine guy
on bended knee,
buffs the penny loafers
of an executive
who speaks
on the phone
to someone
half a world away
utterly unaware
of the soul
at his feet. Ω

Catholic Worker Calendar

February 6 & 20, March 6 & 20 — Mass or Evening Prayer: Please join us in prayer and song on Mason Street at 7:30 P.M. Refreshments to follow.

March 4 — Westborough Eight Court Vigil: Please join us for a vigil outside the Westborough District Court, 8 -9 A.M., prior to the court hearing for the eight women and men who protested against the Keystone XL Pipeline at the Trans-Canada regional office. Call 508 753-3588 for rides.

March 9 — Vigil Against Gun Violence: Please join us in decrying the sale of assault rifles and high-capacity ammunition. Noon - 1 P.M. at the Millbury Walmart. For more information, call: 508 753-3588.

March 29 — Stations of the Cross: Please join us at noon for our annual procession reflecting on Christ's suffering and modern day injustices. Gather at 52 Mason Street. Bread and soup available afterwards.

Mason Street Musings

Jeannette Budzinski showed up at the door on a bright morning in January holding a trash bag full of beautiful quilts. "For the house," she said. "Use them, or raffle them off for money." It was the second donation of bed covers in two days from parishioners at a local church. How did those good people know our supply of blankets had become pretty ratty? In the first bag, we found hand-crocheted afghans, floral-patterned comforters, and now these multi-colored quilts bordered with tidy rows of cross stitches. Just looking at them made me feel serene.

A week before the glorious quilts arrived, our three-year-old gas furnace broke down. The malfunction happened on a Saturday and required a part that had to be ordered. For a day or two, I donned four layers of sweaters, instead of my usual two, and Scott wore a winter cap to bed. The chill made me think of our dear friend Ken Hannaford-Ricardi who took off for Afghanistan in January to spend six weeks with war-weary Kabulis. This is the second time Ken has made the excursion which he describes as a ministry of presence. He will teach English, help out with the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers, and "just be" among the poor who are to be found everywhere in Kabul.

Several times a week, the Peace Volunteers and their American friends climb the steep, icy paths that wind through Kabul's surrounding mountains to bring duvets, blankets padded with wool, to war widows and their children. The women, who are desperately poor, keep moving up the mountain to isolating heights, where rent for a one-room house is cheap and heat scant. During our heatless days, when the cold distracted us, we couldhuddle beside the open door of our electric oven. But the cold of Kabul is impossible for the poor

Grace Duffy

to escape. There are mornings when the women and children awake in their mountain homes blanketed in snow. The duvets are intended to bring them much needed warmth.

Here on Mason Street, we are grateful for the warm presence of Robert Peters. Last fall, he attended our mini-series on Catholic Social Teaching and volunteered at the bakery. In mid-December, we invited him to move in. He is with us until late January, or longer, we hope.

Raised Catholic, Robert formally studied to be a Baptist minister, converted to Orthodox Judaism, then informally studied Buddhism before returning to the faith tradition of his childhood. "I live my life in widening circles that reach out across the world," writes the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. The line seems to describe the religious migration of Robert, an East/West Catholic who, after Sunday Mass, chants with his Buddhist friends at the Vietnamese temple nearby. The nuns send him home with bags of cooked food for the house. "I can't leave Christ," he said at dinner one night. "And I have tried."

Last Saturday, a retired police officer, now deacon, brought a woman in need to the house. Standing in the hallway, he spoke with awe about "Blessed Dorothy Day."

"You people do good work," he said. How often have I heard that phrase, invariably spoken when I think I am doing a shabby job. The remark always encourages, but I wish I had challenged its accuracy. "You people." The words suggest the speaker is outside the circle of Good Work, when they are not. It was, after all, the deacon who drove the woman here and he showed much more patience with her than I. There is no column long enough to describe the "you people" of Mason Street. The quilt-bearer, Ken, the hiking Afghans, Robert and his Buddhist nuns, and the deacon are among the many "you people" doing the Good Work here, which like Rilke's circle seems to widen with the passing year. Visit us. Pray for us. And if fortunes allow, please send a donation. Ω

Claire

SS. Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker
52 Mason Street
Worcester, MA 01610
(508) 753-3588 & (508) 753-3089

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WORCESTER, MA
PERMIT NO. 271